T/N note: Arashi's name means "storm," while Shizuka's name means "quiet." The two "puppetmasters" of this story are android twins.

Translator (Japanese → English): Umiko
Proofreader, cleaner, typesetter: Umeko

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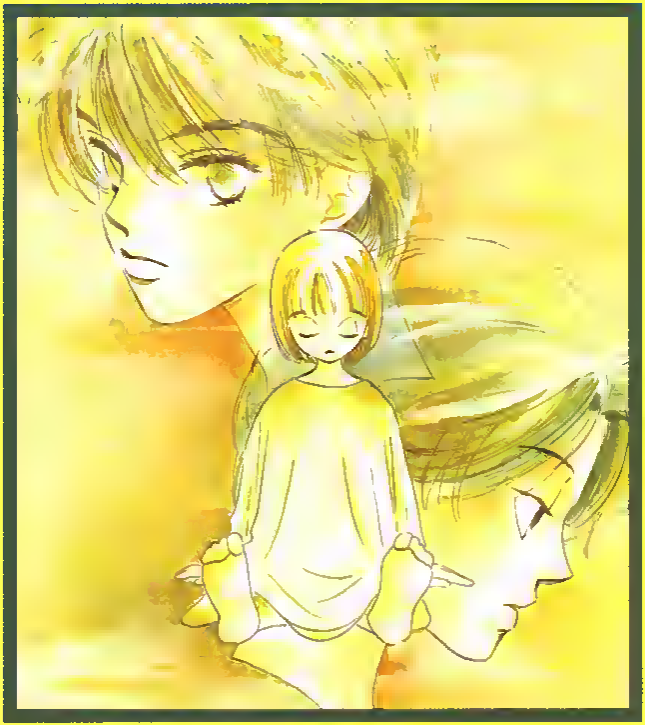
花とゆめCOMICS

人形芝居

高尾滋（たかおしげる）

1

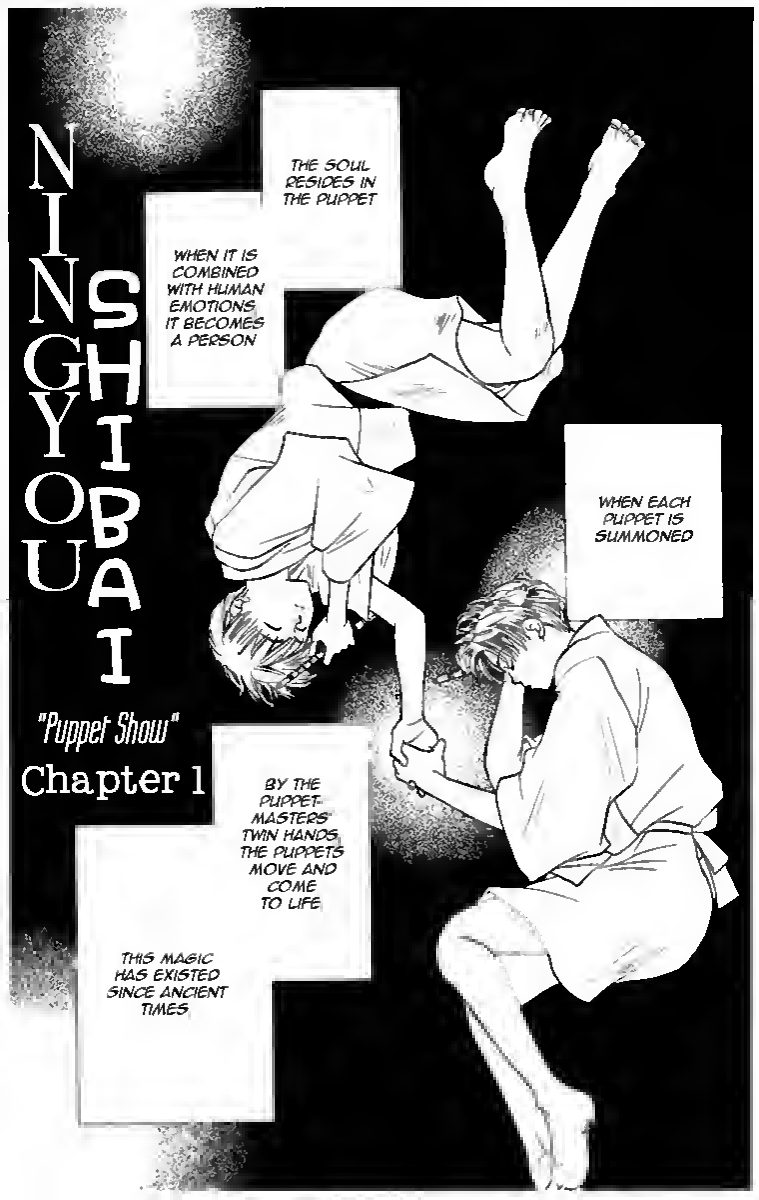


HANA TO YUME COMICS

Ningyou Shibai

VOLUME 1

TAKAO SHIGERU


NINGYOU SHIBAI
"Puppet Show"
Chapter 1
THE SOUL RESIDES IN THE PUPPET
WHEN IT IS COMBINED WITH HUMAN EMOTIONS IT BECOMES A PERSON
WHEN EACH PUPPET IS SUMMONED
BY THE PUPPET-MASTERS' TWIN HANDS, THE PUPPETS MOVE AND COME TO LIFE
THIS MAGIC HAS EXISTED SINCE ANCIENT TIMES

CRUNCH
beep
28X4, WEST TOKYO DESERT
A DOLL HAS RE-TURNED!!
I SAW IT FROM ABOVE!!
BAM
SHIZUKA!
WHAT?
IF IT DOES NOT RECORD IT THE RIGHT WAY, IT'S ALL RIGHT.
boop!
tap tap tap tap
I KNOW
...N
NO!
FROM THE HEAT REACTION, INSTALLED IN THE DOLL'S BODY, THE C-CHIP'S SEPARATE PROGRAM.
I GOT A RE-SPONSE FROM THE SENSOR A LITTLE WHILE AGO
BORN MARCH 3, 2780...
click
WERE YOU ON THE ROOF AGAIN, ARASHI?
IT WASN'T A MIRAGE, WAS IT?

IT'S HIRO!
WASN'T HE SUPPOSED TO COME 24 YEARS AGO!?
HE HAD SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO DO
WERE YOU HOPING FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT TO HAPPEN...
beep
...HUH?
WHAT?
IS IT A DOLL?
AGAIN
THE SENSOR RESPONDED...
NO, THIS IS-
beep
AH, YOU CAME!!
I'M HOME, ARASHI!!
step
WHAT!
YOU DON'T LOOK ANY DIFFERENT
OF COURSE NOT SINCE I'M A DOLL!
WELCOME HOME, HIRO
I'M BACK, SHIZUKA!
WELCOME BACK, HIRO!

HIRO WENT SOMEWHERE NEARBY
EAST TOKYO, MAYBE?
I didn't do anything wrong.
I DIDN'T MEAN ANY-THING LIKE THAT
IT'S JUST AMAZING HOW YOU DON'T CHANGE
SINCE OUR DOLLS HAVE ADAPTABILITY AND LEARNING FUNCTIONS, THEY DON'T NEED TO CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO THE ENVIRON-MENT
Eh
THEY WERE AN ELEGANT SEEMING COUPLE...
DID I DO WELL?
Yes
I WAS CHERISHED
THERE WAS NOTHING DIFFICULT FOR ME TO DO
I WAS ONLY RAISED ALONG-SIDE A CHILD, MIDORI
A CHILD WHO WAS STRONG-WILLED... BUT ALSO GENTLE
MIDORI MUST BE A GIRL, THEN
YEAH!
WHEN SPRING COMES,
SHE'S GETTING MARRIED!!
knock knock
UMM
I'LL GET IT.
CLICK

W-WAH!
POW
IT'S A PERSON
I DON'T KNOW WHO IT IS
AH!
WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW?
I DIDN'T HEAR IT, BUT WHAT WAS IT?
sfx=BAM
HIRO!!
WHAT HAP-PENED?
IT WAS SUD-DEN
Y
YES
ARE YOU OKAY!? SHIZUKA!!
I WAS surprised
sfx=grabs
YOU'RE OKAY!!
!?
EH!?
MIDORI!?
YOU'RE

OUCH!
I'M ALL RIGHT
I'M REALLY SORRY
I.. SUR-PRISED YOU A LOT
HEY, MIDORI
YOU'RE A VERY SPIRITED LADY
-OUCH! THIS GUY HAS GOOD HEARING
YELP
GASP
UM.. I'M SORRY FOR BE-FORE..
HERE
grab
TH THANK YOU
EH?
IT'S ATTACH-ED INSIDE HIRO'S SHOE..
IT'S A TRANS-MITTER
ISN'T THIS PLACE AMAZING
I SUPPOSE IT IS.
DID YOU HEAR ABOUT IT FROM YOUR PARENTS?
WE'D BEEN LIVING TOGETHER FOR TWENTY-FOUR YEARS, LIKE SIBLINGS. THEN ONE DAY HIRO SUDDENLY WASN'T THERE
HE STARTED SAYING THINGS ABOUT A DOLL'S LIFE SPAN
WE DIDN'T GIVE HIM PERMISSION TO LEAVE!
SO..
THAT'S HOW YOU LEARNED ABOUT FATHER AND MOTHER!
IT'S ILLEGAL.
It's real

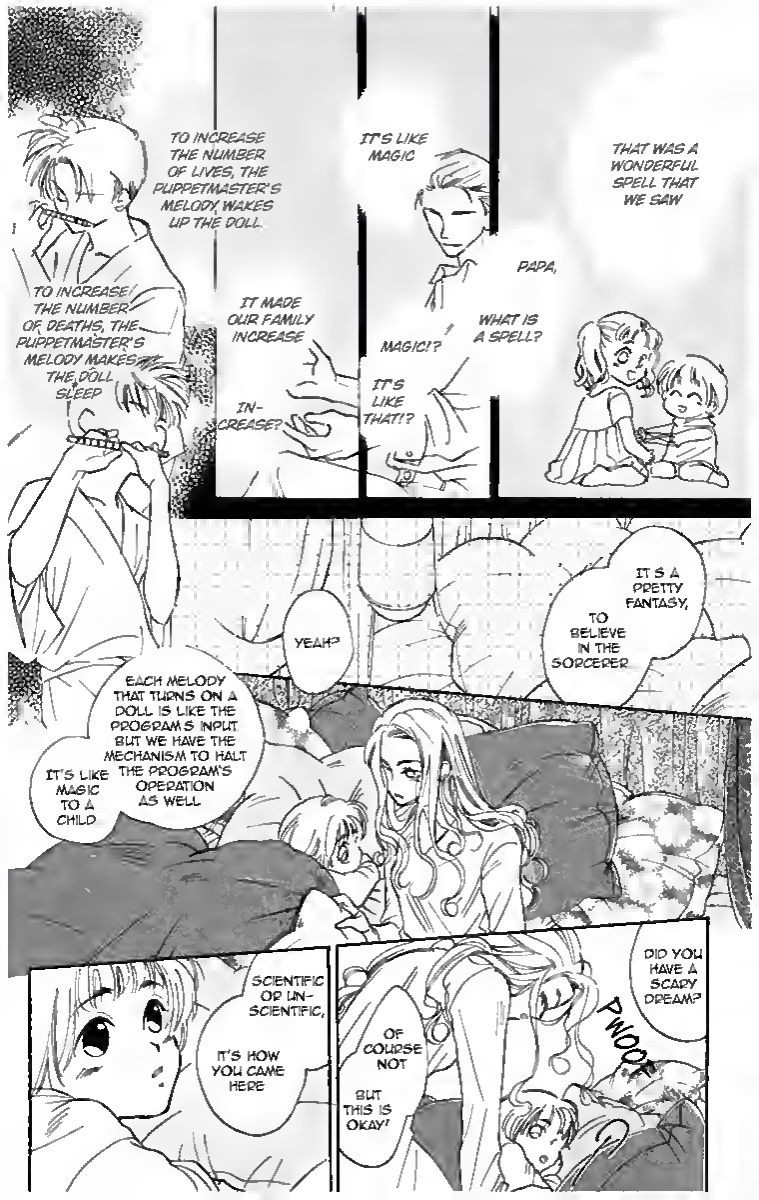
HIRO!
DID YOU GET YOUR FAMILY'S PERMISSION TO COME BACK?
I'M SORRY
I DIDN'T WANT THEM TO CRY,
SO I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING
You didn't
HE WAS RAISED SHELTERED...
convince them?
It was like that
I'VE GIVEN THEM EVERYTHING I CAN.
WE DON'T NEED TO MEET AGAIN
PLEASE! LET HIRO LIVE!!
GRAB
!
MIDORI?
I HEARD FROM FATHER HIRO WAS CREATED WITH SOMETHING LIKE MAGIC
IT WAS LONG AGO!
PLEASE
IT'S IMPORTANT
.....
MIDORI-SAN
SINCE YOU ASKED...
.....
WE ARE
NOT MAGICIANS

shine
click
WE ARE NOT GODS
COME THIS WAY
THAT'S
AN ANDROID?
OUR DOLLS ARE LIKE THIS
YOUR PARENTS UNDERSTOOD IT
YOU DIDN'T NOTICE THAT HIS BATTERY WAS REPLACED
SHE'S NOT TALKING AS MUCH
YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
WE ARE ONLY PUPPET-MASTERS

WITHOUT THE POPULATION INCREASING, THE "ONE FAMILY, ONE CHILD" POLICY'S LONELY CHILDREN ARE GIVEN SIBLINGS
HOSPITALIZED PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO RELATIVES OR FRIENDS TO VISIT THEM, THE ELDERLY WHO NEED A COMPANION TO TALK WITH...
THESE KINDS OF PEOPLE ARE OUR BASIC CUSTOMERS
IT'S RARE FOR A COUPLE NOT BLESSED WITH CHILDREN TO VISIT
WE AGREED IMMEDIATELY BECAUSE WE PITIED THEM.
YOUR PARENTS
WHO
!?
THEY SAID THE CHILD'S GROWTH SHOULD BE NOTICE-ABLE
YOUR PARENTS DID NOT WANT A DOLL
THE DOLL'S LIFE SPAN WAS DIFFERENT FROM THE USUAL CUSTOMER'S SITUATION ...FOR EXAMPLE
THE SIBLING MODEL WOULD WATCH THE CHILD UNTIL THEY REACHED ADULT-HOOD
FOR THE ELDERLY AND SICK IT WOULD WATCH THEM UNTIL THEY DIED.
EH...
IN OTHER WORDS, THAT IS THE DOLL'S LIFE SPAN
WHEN THEIR ROLE ENDS, THEIR SYSTEM RETURNS THEM HERE
WHA...

.....
DOLLS ARE MADE TO LIVE BESIDE PEOPLE
SHOULD THEY BE ABAN-DONED?
DON'T YOU THINK AN ANDROID WOULD BE SAD IF THERE WEREN'T ANY PEOPLE!?
DOLLS ARE DISPOS-ABLE!?
THERE'S A REASON FOR THAT
THAT S...
TO LOSE A FRIEND
ISN'T IT BETTER FOR THE DOLL TO LEAVE THAN TO BE ABANDONED BY THEIR COMPANION?
TO LIVE TOGETHER, BESIDE THEIR SIBLINGS, UNTIL THEY WATCH THEM DIE
THINK THAT AFTER THE DOLLS ROLE IS OVER.
SO, WE
THEY SHOULD REMEMBER THIS PLACE
FROM THEIR PROGRAM-MING.
THEY DON'T HAVE THE EMOTIONS TO HANDLE IT
THE DOLLS LIVE FOR THOSE PEOPLE'S SAKE
THEY WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE WITHOUT THOSE PEOPLE BESIDE THEM.

BAM
YOU'RE WRONG!
HIRO!?
I
DISCARDING HIM!
I WOULDN'T...!
THE DOLL'S DECISION...?
THEY AREN'T OBLIGATED TO COME BACK HERE
HIRO SHOULD LIVE!
YOU DIDN'T THINK OF THAT AS ABANDONING ME!?
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU SAID!?
YOU COULDN'T BE WITH ME ANYMORE
OUR STORY
OUGHT TO BE,
A HAPPY STORY
HIRO
I HEARD ABOUT IT
YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED


TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF LIVES, THE PUPPETMASTER'S MELODY WAKES UP THE DOLL
TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF DEATHS, THE PUPPETMASTER'S MELODY MAKES THE DOLL SLEEP
IT'S LIKE MAGIC
IT MADE OUR FAMILY INCREASE
IN-CREASE?
MAGIC!?
IT'S LIKE THAT!?
THAT WAS A WONDERFUL SPELL THAT WE SAW
PAPA,
WHAT IS A SPELL?
IT'S A PRETTY FANTASY, TO BELIEVE IN THE SORCERER
YEAH?
EACH MELODY THAT TURNS ON A DOLL IS LIKE THE PROGRAM'S INPUT BUT WE HAVE THE MECHANISM TO HALT THE PROGRAM'S OPERATION AS WELL
IT'S LIKE MAGIC TO A CHILD
SCIENTIFIC OR UN-SCIENTIFIC,
IT'S HOW YOU CAME HERE
DID YOU HAVE A SCARY DREAM?
PWOF
OF COURSE NOT
BUT THIS IS OKAY!

HEY, MIDORI
YEAH?
DO DOLLS REALLY HAVE SOULS, LIKE HUMANS?
HUMANS GIVE US AFFECTION.
WE'RE RAISED WITH THEIR EMOTIONS
STRIKING A DOLL IS LIKE STRIKING A CHILD IN THIS SOCIETY.
DOLLS ARE A SUB-STITUTE FOR A SERVANT AT HOME, TOO.
SO,
IF THE FAMILY DOESN'T LOVE THEM,
THEY WILL GO BACK HOME IMMED-IATELY
WE WILL FALL ASLEEP WITH SHIZUKA'S SONG,
AND WHENEVER WE HEAR ARASHI'S SONG,
WE ARE GIVEN A NEW LIFE
DO YOU HATE SHIZUKA AND ARASHI?
.....
I DON'T HATE THEM.
I'M GRATE-FUL TO THEM.
THAT'S NICE...

IF I CAN MAKE NIDORI HAPPY
IT WOULD BE VERY NICE...
IT'S PRETTY
VERY
YOU THINK OF HIRO AS SOMEONE VERY IMPORTANT
A SURGE IN CONCERT WITH SHIZUKA'S SONG

HIRO HAS DECIDED TO PASS THE BATON
TO A GOOD MAN
THAT'S...
BAM
YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE CHILDREN! SINCE YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED
!
SOMEDAY I WANT TO HEAR
YOUR SONG AS WELL.
IT'S HIRO'S WISH
BECAUSE YOU'RE HIRO'S PRINCESS.
THANK YOU

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT
Pity
THAT'S WHY I THINK IT'S A CARELESS METHOD
THUD
THUD
WERE YOU ON THE ROOF AGAIN?
I WAS REPAIRING THE ROOF!
Hey, it's hey's it's pitch black?
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU SAID THAT?
IF THE SENSORS PICKED UP ANYTHING, THE COMPUTER WOULD LOOK INTO IT
SHIZUKA!
I SAW A HUMAN FIGURE!
sfx=BAM!

HERE IS THE PLACE WHERE THE DOLLS' SOULS DWELL.
HEARING ISN'T A WEAKNESS OF ANDROIDS.
IT'S NOT A PROB-LEM!
You're unusual
I'm not!

COMBINED WITH HUMAN EMOTIONS, THEY LIVE ALONGSIDE PEOPLE...